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# Insights into hours worked, November 2020

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**i** Source: [Labour Force, Australia, November 2020](#)

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## Hours worked and employment

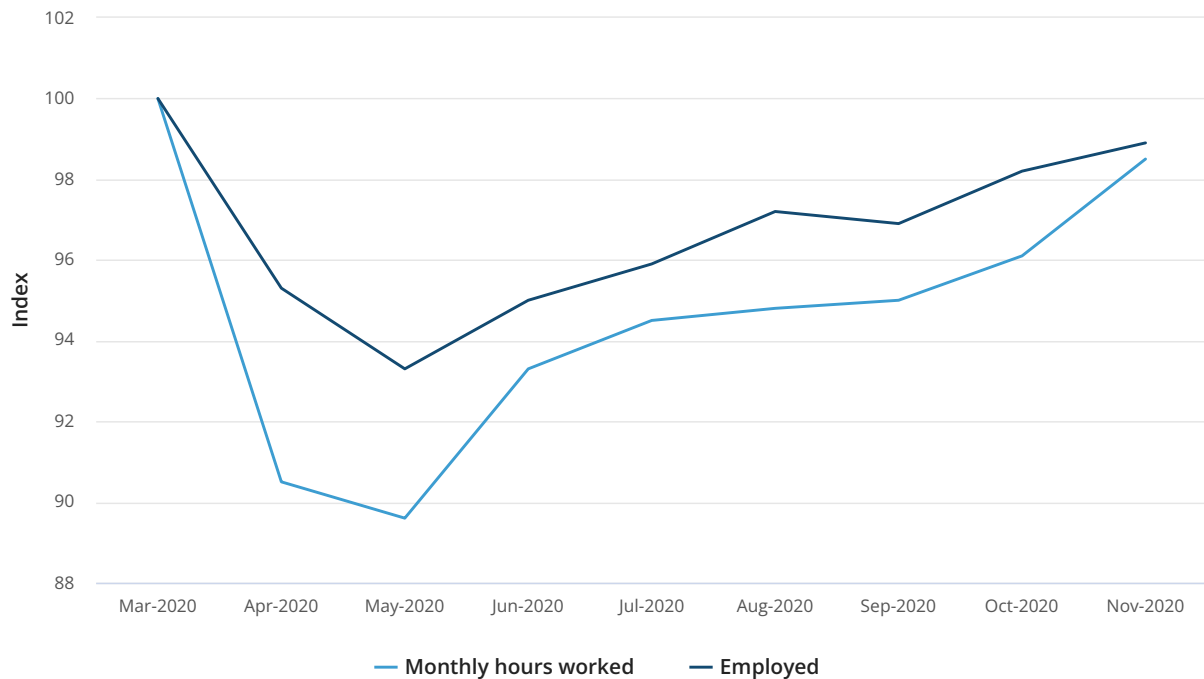
The recovery in hours worked and employment continued in November with hours worked increasing by 2.5% and employment increasing 0.7%. This followed increases in hours worked in both September (0.2%) and October (1.2%), and a decrease in employment in September (-0.3%) and subsequent increase in October (1.4%).

Hours worked increased by 5.2% in Victoria, following the 5.6% increase recorded in October. NSW also recorded a large increase (2.3%) following the 1.7% decrease in October.

Since the low point in May, total hours worked has increased by 159.8 million hours, recovering 86% of the 185.6 million hour decrease between March and May.

After larger falls than employment early in the COVID-19 period, hours worked has since recorded stronger growth than employment. In November, hours worked was 1.5% lower than March and employment was 1.1% lower than March (Chart 1).

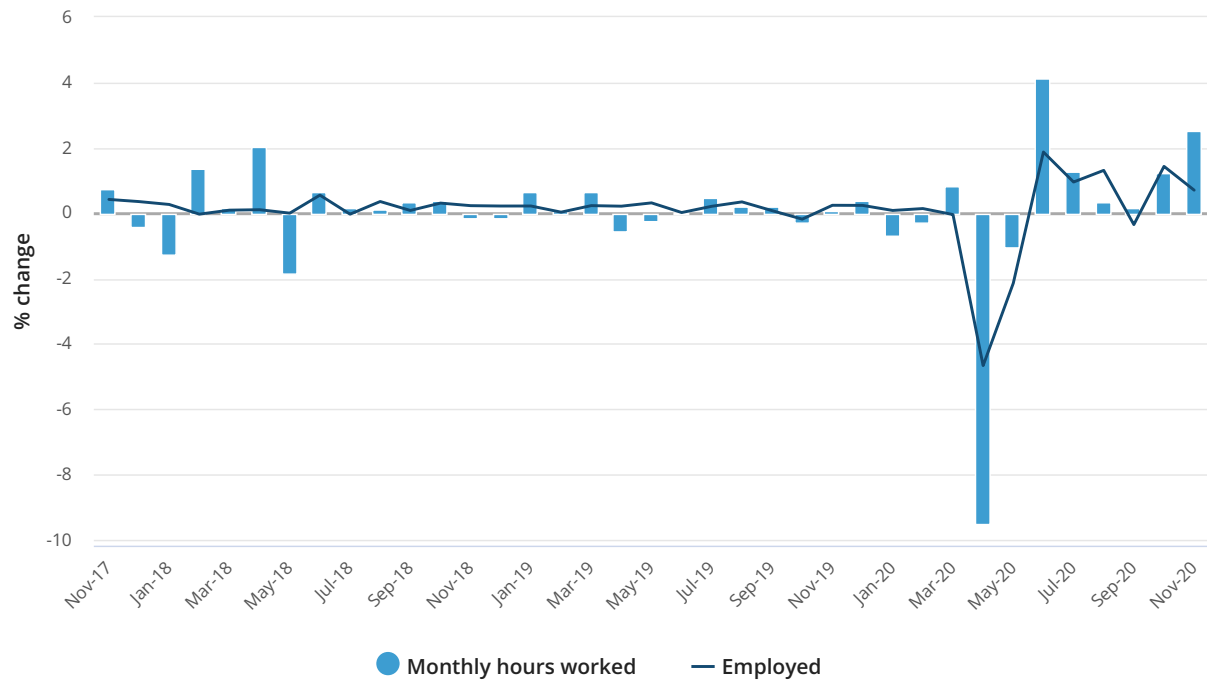
Chart 1: Hours worked and employment index, Seasonally adjusted (March 2020 = 100.0)



Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

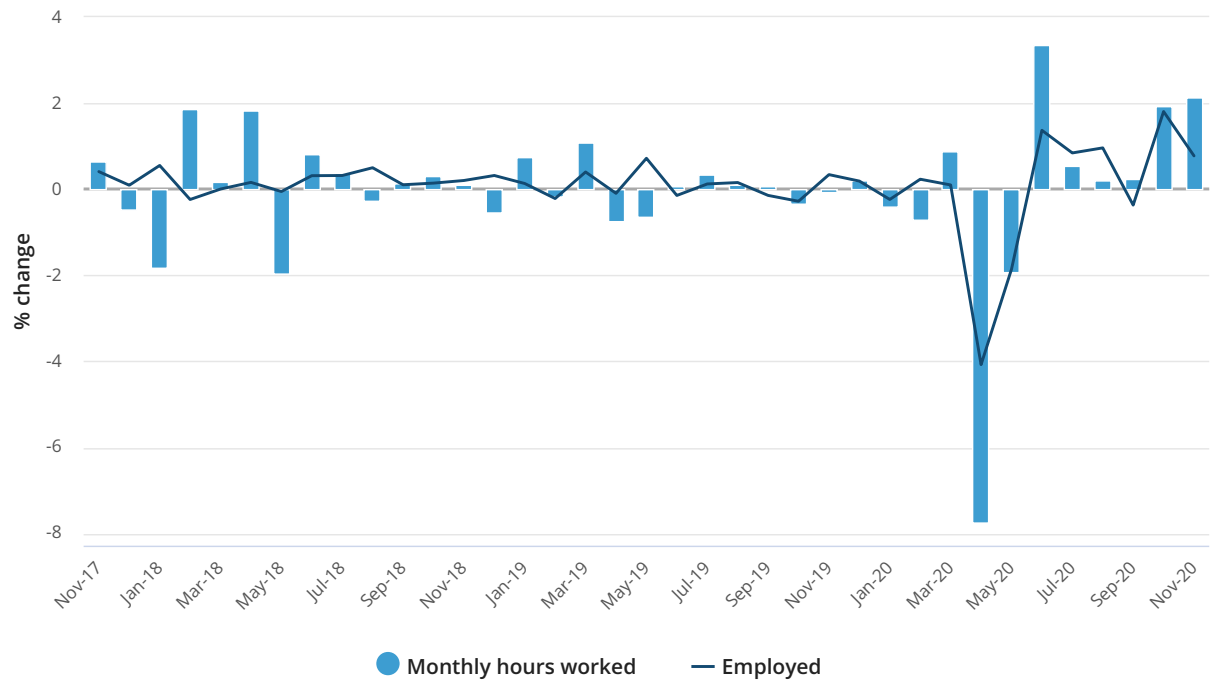
Charts 2, 3 and 4 show the monthly changes in seasonally adjusted hours worked and employment for all people, men and women. Hours worked for women showed stronger growth from May to August, following the much larger fall in female hours early in the COVID-19 period. In October, growth in male hours worked was stronger (1.9% compared to 0.3% for women), however in November growth was again stronger for women (3.0% compared to 2.1% for men).

Chart 2: Monthly change in employment and hours worked, Seasonally adjusted



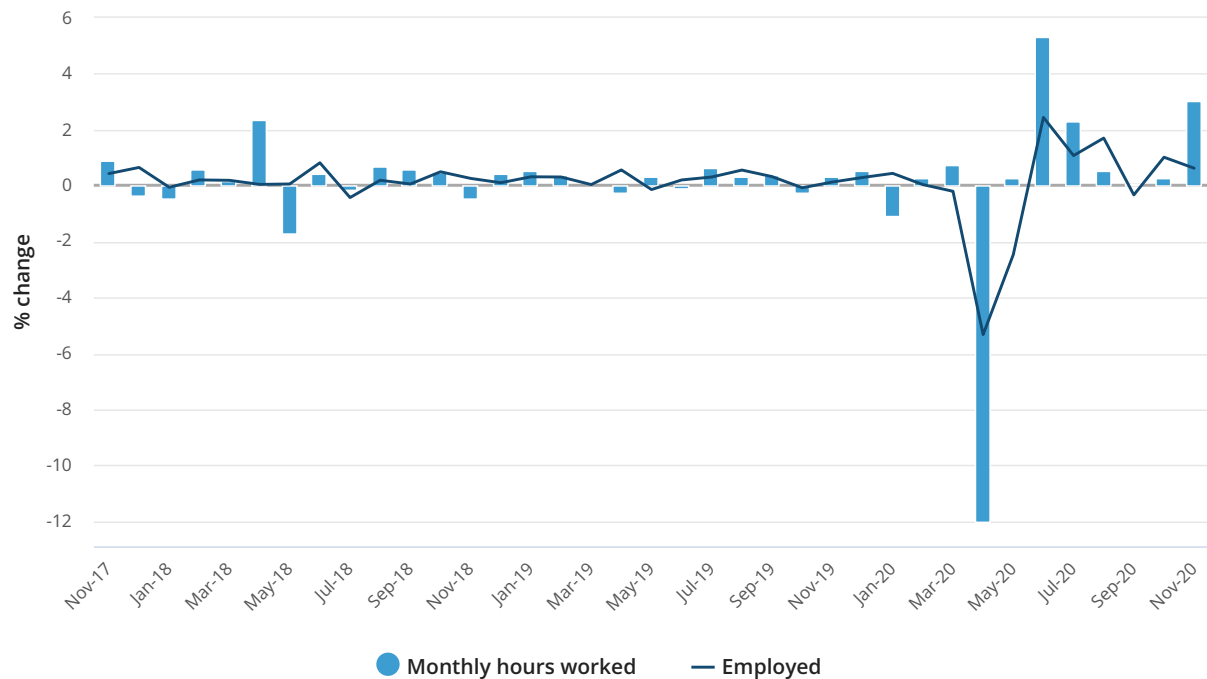
Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

Chart 3: Monthly change in employment and hours worked, Males, Seasonally adjusted



Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

Chart 4: Monthly change in employment and hours worked, Females, Seasonally adjusted

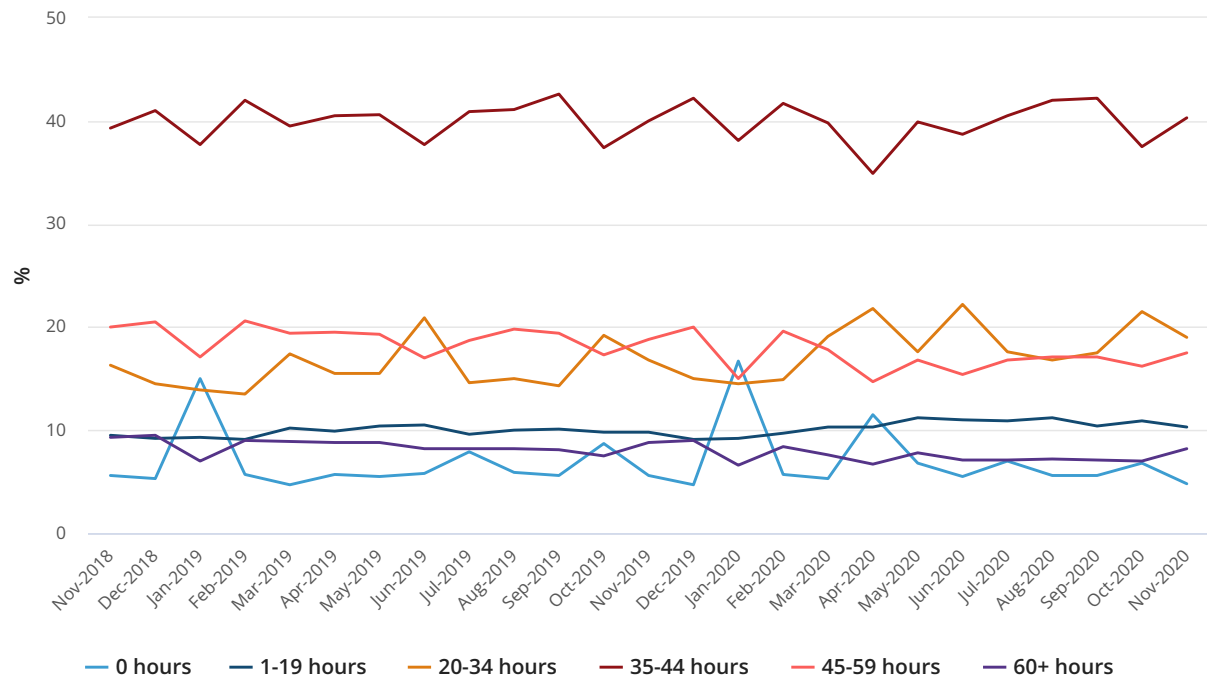


Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

## Hours worked ranges

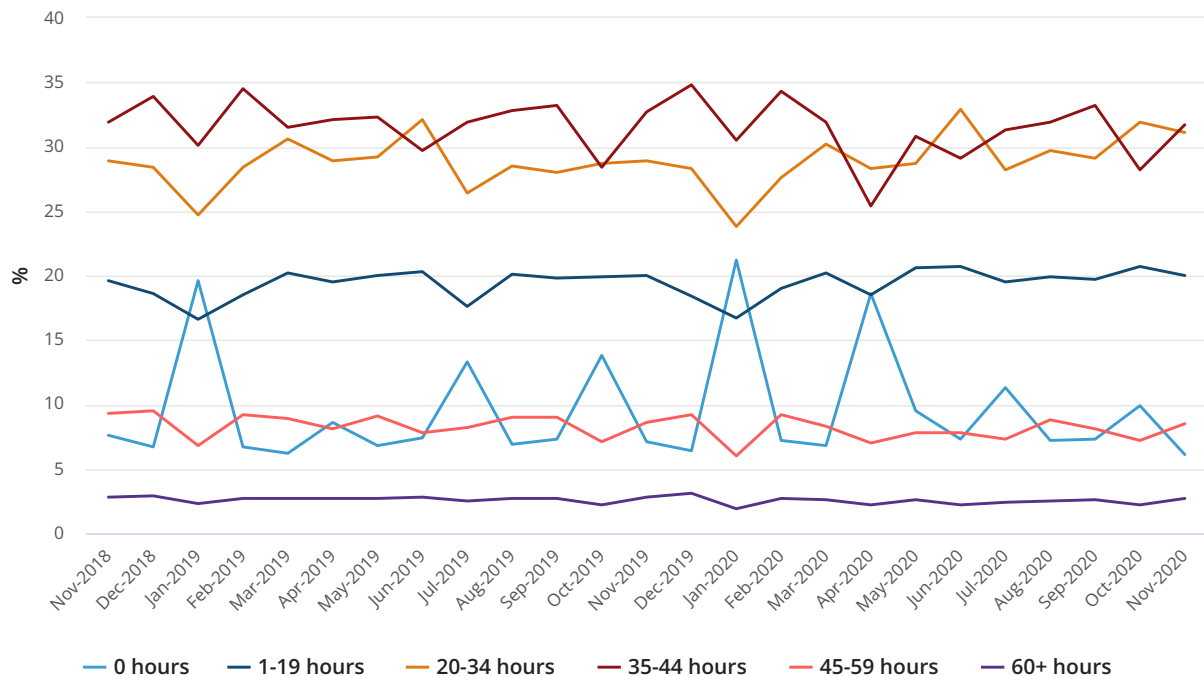
It is also illuminating to examine the number of people working within various hours ranges. Charts 5 and 6 show the distribution of employed men and women across the hours worked categories over the past three years.

Chart 5: Distribution of hours worked in all jobs, Males, Original



Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Table 9

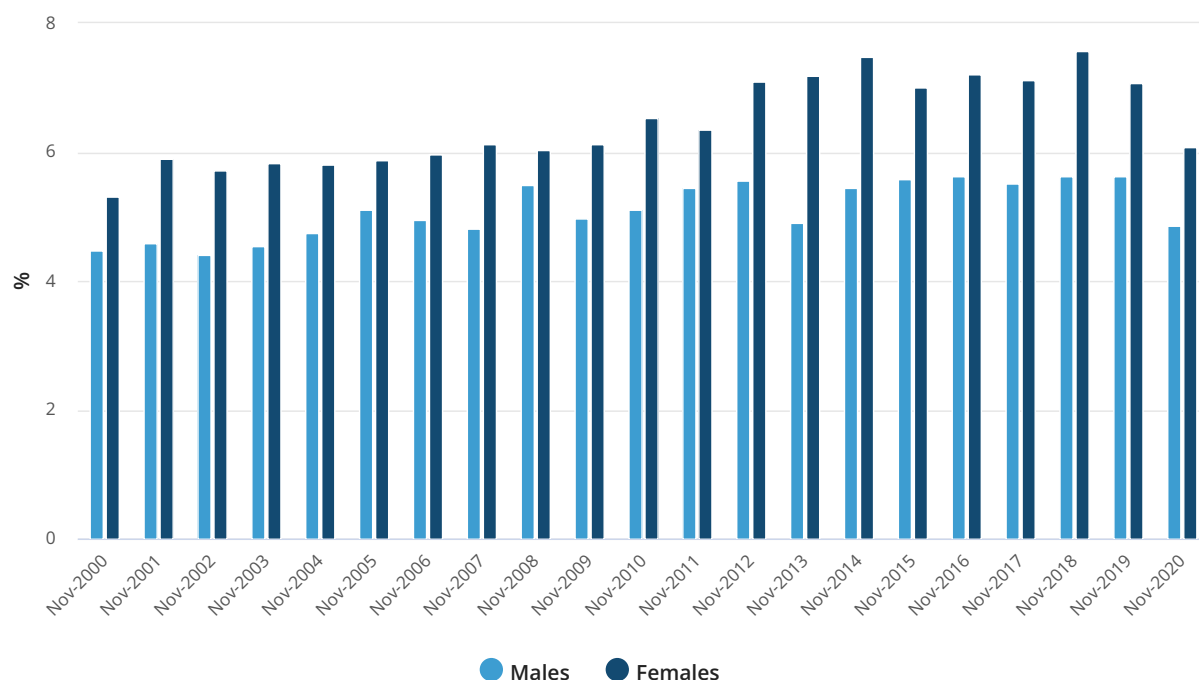
Chart 6: Distribution of hours worked in all jobs, Females, Original



Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Table 9

Chart 7 shows that the proportion of employed men and women who worked zero hours in November 2020 was lower than November in the previous four years. These year-to-year comparisons were very different to the record highs for men and women that were seen in April and May 2020 (relative to April and May in previous years).

Chart 7: Proportion of employed working zero hours, Original



Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Table 9

## Flows between hours worked categories

Table 1 shows the number of people in each of the hours worked categories in November by their hours worked in October.

Of the employed people who worked zero hours in October, 19% also worked zero hours in November - indicating that they have been paid for at least some of the past 4 weeks (otherwise they would no longer be classified as employed). A further 9% of the employed people who worked zero hours in October were not employed in November, a fall from the 16% recorded between September and October.



**Table 1: Flows between hours worked categories, October and November, Original**

November								
	0 hours	1-19 hours	20-34 hours	35-44 hours	45-59 hours	60+ hours	Not employed*	Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
0 hours	199.2	167	213.2	231.9	89.6	38.7	92	1,031.5
1-19 hours	123.8	1,202.6	424.1	178.6	51.8	16.6	127.1	2,124.6
20-34 hours	116.1	312.8	1,698.3	1,028.2	138.8	25.9	69.9	3,389.9
<b>October</b>								
35-44 hours	141.4	103	678.8	2,742.9	425.1	60.8	43.8	4,195.8
45-59 hours	41.9	36.9	116.9	372.2	687.6	156.6	14.5	1,426.6
60+ hours	16.4	8.1	24.1	48.5	120.6	317.2	5.7	540.5
Not employed*	78.4	193.1	118.2	103	24.7	7.8	7,647.6	8,172.8
Total	717.1	2,023.5	3,273.5	4,705.3	1,538	623.8	8,000.5	20,881.8

Source: Longitudinal Labour Force microdata

As month to month flows data are only available for the matched sample, estimates in the table have been reweighted to broadly reflect the entire sample.

\*Not employed includes all people who were unemployed or not in the labour force.

## People working fewer hours, or no hours at all, for economic reasons

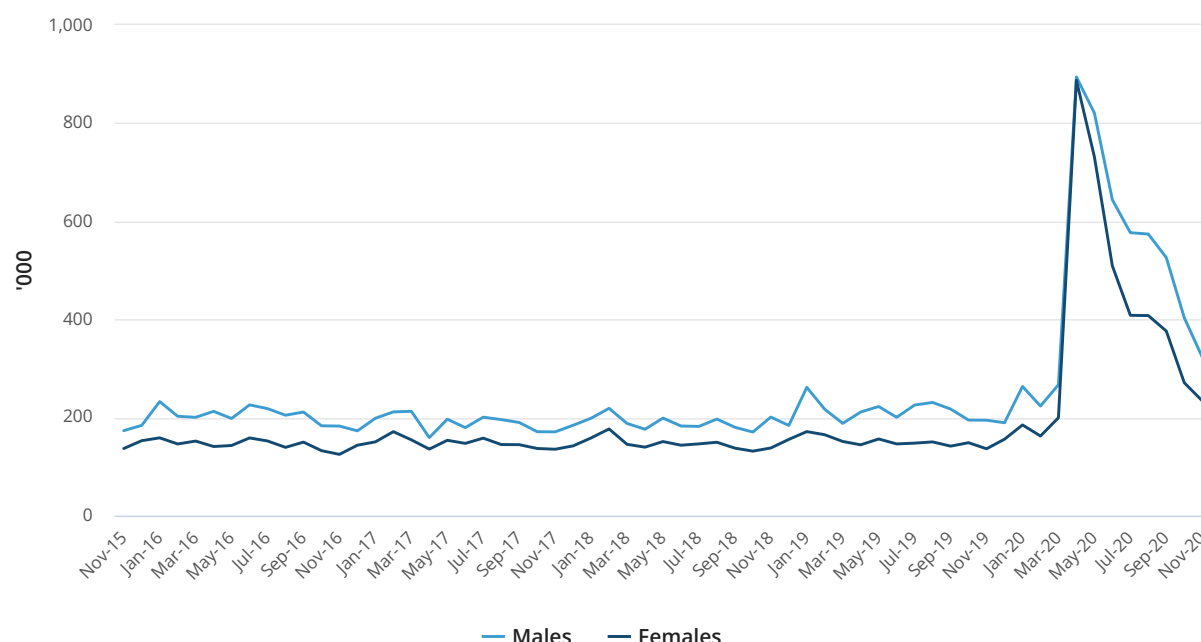
Chart 8 shows that the number of people working fewer (or no) hours for economic reasons continued to decline in November, although for both men (323,100) and women (234,000) it is still slightly higher than the average level of the previous five years.

The number of men and women who worked fewer than their usual hours (or no hours at all) had a similar peak in April (at around 900,000 for both), however, the subsequent reductions have been much greater for women (a fall of over 650,000 since April, compared to just over 570,000 for men).

Overall, there were over 550,000 people who worked fewer than their usual hours for economic reasons in November 2020, a decrease of almost 120,000 since October and over 1.2 million since April 2020 (when it was around 1.8 million people). This comprised:

- almost 210,000 'underemployed full-time workers' (i.e. full-time who worked less than 35 hours in the reference week);
- around 77,000 full-time workers who worked less than their usual hours in the reference week but still worked 35 hours or more; and
- around 270,000 part-time workers.

**Chart 8: People working fewer than their usual hours, or no hours at all, for economic reasons, Original**



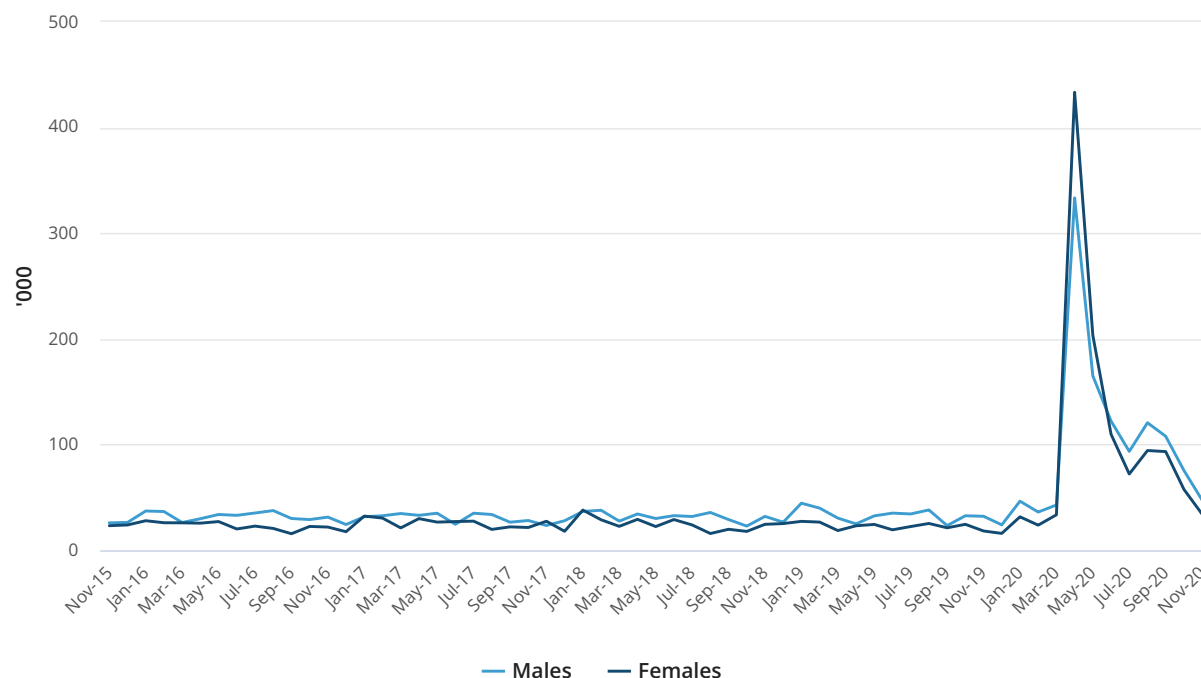
Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Data Cube EM2a

Of the 550,000 employed people who worked less than their usual hours for economic reasons in November, just over 81,000 (or 15%) did not work at all.

## People working zero hours for economic reasons

The number of people working zero hours for economic reasons has also continued to decline, and is now around pre-COVID levels (Chart 9). Following an almost 700,000 increase between March and April, the number of people working zero hours for economic reasons decreased by 600,000 between April and July. There was a 50,000 increase between July and August, followed by a small decrease in September. Between September and October, the number of people working zero hours for economic reasons fell by a further 70,000, before falling a further 50,000 in November.

Chart 9: Employed people working zero hours for economic reasons,



Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Data Cube EM2a

A further 37,200 employed people did not work at all as they began, left or lost a job. The majority of these people left or lost a job. This has also declined since April, when it was over 350,000 people.

Table 2 shows the number of people working zero hours for economic reasons in each state or territory. All states and territories recorded very large increases in people working zero hours for economic reasons between March and April, followed by a steady decrease to July. Between July and September, in all states and territories except Victoria, the number of people working zero hours for economic reasons remained relatively steady or decreased slightly.

In Victoria, the number of people working zero hours for economic reasons almost doubled between July and August. However, between September and October the number almost halved, and then halved again in November. In all states and territories, the number of people working zero hours for economic reasons was close to pre-COVID levels.

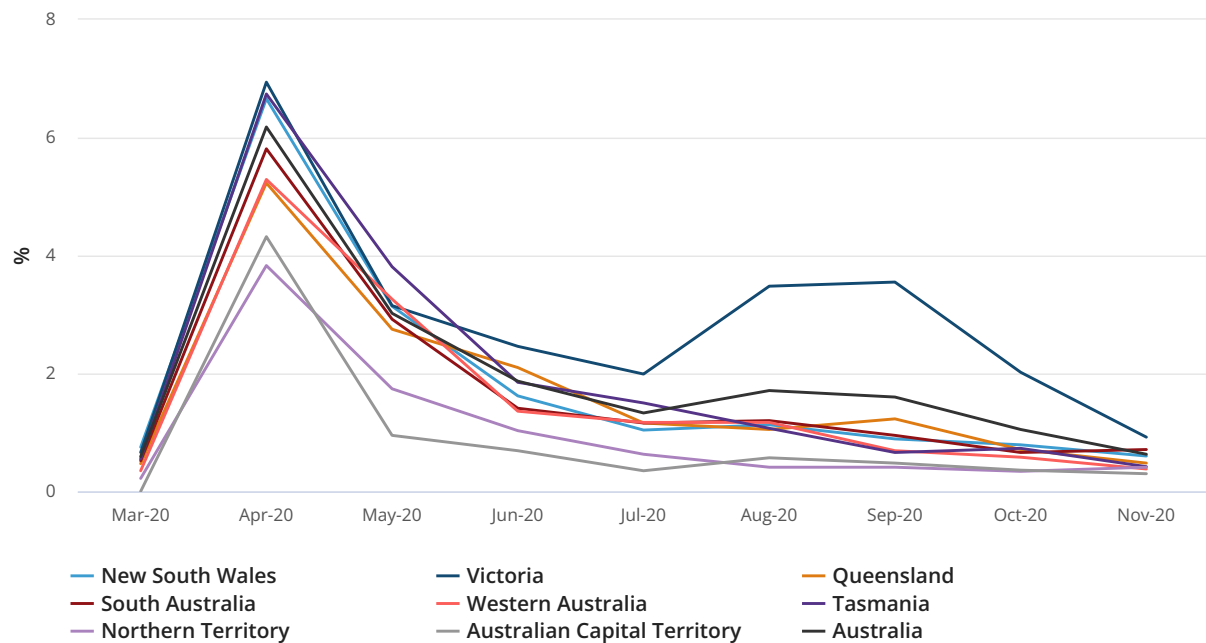
Table 2: People working zero hours for economic reasons, by State and territory, Original

	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20
	('000)	('000)	('000)	('000)	('000)	('000)	('000)	('000)	('000)
<b>New South Wales</b>	30.8	261.0	121.4	63.8	41.7	45.6	35.9	32.0	30.0
<b>Victoria</b>	22.7	229.7	102.7	80.6	65.5	112.7	113.5	66.4	57.0
<b>Queensland</b>	12.0	126.7	64.8	50.9	28.4	26.4	31.1	18.2	17.0
<b>South Australia</b>	4.5	47.9	23.7	11.6	9.6	10.0	8.1	5.6	5.0
<b>Western Australia</b>	4.8	69.4	42.0	17.7	15.4	15.7	9.3	7.9	7.0
<b>Tasmania</b>	1.4	16.9	9.2	4.6	3.8	2.7	1.6	1.8	1.0
<b>Northern Territory</b>	0.3	5.1	2.3	1.3	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.0
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	0.0	10.0	2.2	1.6	0.8	1.4	1.1	0.9	0.0
<b>Australia</b>	76.4	766.7	368.3	232.1	165.9	215.1	201.3	133.3	120.0

Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Data Cube EM2b

Chart 10 shows the proportion of employed people in each state and territory who worked zero hours for economic reasons.

Chart 10: Proportion of employed people working zero hours for economic reasons, by State and territory, Original



Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Data Cube EM2b and Labour Force, Australia Table 12

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(<mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au>).